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Current Literature.

The Oldest Law-Book in the World.

Among the most interesting discoveries of M. de Morgan at Susa, the capital of Elam, is a stele of Hammurabi, King of Babylon. This king is probably identical with the Amraphel of Gen., chap. 14. He lived about 2300 B. C., almost a thousand years before Moses, and governed an empire extending from Elam to the Mediterranean. The stele in question is of diorite stone, seven feet six inches in height, and in addition to the inscription contains a picture of Hammurabi worshipping the sun-god. There are 3,638 short lines of text arranged in forty-four columns. The inscription begins with a long introduction stating what Hammurabi had done for his land and its temple; an item of special interest is the fact that Hammurabi calls himself "the warrior benefitting Larsa" (identified with the Ellasar of Gen., chap. 14). The code of laws which follows consists of about 280 enactments, dealing with a wide range of subjects; unfortunately about thirty-five of the laws have been erased. It reflects a civilization of a very high order, the product of many centuries of history. In justice and mercy it compares favorably with the Mosaic legislation; notwithstanding its much greater antiquity.

The laws concerning marriage and the rights of women are relatively very numerous and aim at justice, *e. g.*, defamation of the character of a betrothed or married woman is punished by branding on the forehead. Adultery is punished by the death of both the guilty parties. The following law recalls the case of Sarah and Hagar: "If anyone takes a wife and she gives her maid to her husband, and the maid bears children, and thereupon claims equality with her mistress, since she has borne him children, the master cannot sell her for money, but the mistress shall reduce her to slavery and count her among the maid servants." The code fixes the wages for man and beast by the day and by the year, and prescribes the exact fees for surgical operations with severe penalties for failure to heal, ranging from the payment of a fine to the amputation of the hands. The punishment in cases of violence was "eye for eye and tooth for tooth." False accusation brings upon the slanderer the same penalty as

would have befallen the accused had he been found guilty. Breach of trust is severely punished. Capital offenses are many. Fugitive slave laws are specific and severe. The laws are wholly of a secular character, the religious element being entirely lacking. They are arranged in groups, laws dealing with the same subject being brought together.

The discovery of this code is of the greatest importance, not only for the study of ancient Babylonian civilization and for a comparative study of the Babylonian and Hebrew systems of legislation, but also for the light it throws upon the larger problem of the ethical and spiritual development of the human race. The laws of Moses no longer stand alone. A translation of the inscription is given by Father Scheil in Vol. IV of the *Mémoires de la Délégation en Perse*, and by Hugo Winckler in *Der alte Orient*, 4, Jahrgang, Heft 4.

Did Jesus Regard the Kingdom as Solely Eschatological?

The last decade has been notable for numerous studies of Jesus' teaching concerning the kingdom of God, and especially for inquiry into the historical environment which conditioned his presentation of this subject. In the *Theologische Rundschau*, Hefts 10 and 11, 1902, Professor Bousset, of the University of Göttingen, reviews the results of this work. The current opinion, as established by the best scholarship, is that Jesus regarded the kingdom of God as both present and future; it is introduced by himself, it is to undergo a process of growth and development, and in the future it is to find a perfect consummation. But several able German scholars of the younger generation have abandoned this view for one which regards the kingdom as wholly eschatological. Bousset is one of these. He says: "Together with his contemporaries, Jesus expected the miraculous kingdom of God. He knew nothing of a transfiguration and transformation of the world through immanent forces. To him, as to his age, the world seemed only worthy to be destroyed. He taught his disciples to save themselves from this world unto the entirely new conditions that were soon to come." But Bousset also holds that Jesus' teaching concerning the kingdom survives the decay of the eschatological form in which it was presented, because he emphasized the universal dominion (*Herrschaft*) of God instead of the political kingdom (*Reich*) of Jewish expectation, and because his ethics were based, not on the attainment of an external kingdom as the supreme good, but on conformity to the will of God revealed within the individual soul.